



First group of American soldiers to arrive at Aix-les-Bains, French rest city, for a week's leave, all readers of *The Stars and Stripes*.

ners, at least, were correct. That is some improvement.

The more one sees and hears of the American troops over here the more one is inclined to believe that the United States would surely be up against it if Ireland were to make a separate peace.

America's war objects are perfectly clear. She is solidly united to Britain in opposition to the Continental policy in Europe and in Asia.—*Die Vossische Zeitung*.

If by "Continental policy" you mean the policy of slaughtering babies by wholesale in Europe and in Asia, then, Herr Editor, you are absolutely right.

If the standardized suit becomes a burden to civilians, we can assure them that if they are seeking variety they will find plenty of it in the army's stocks.

"It's our cowboys and your East Enders who are the real pals. You'll see a Cockney with his arm around a man from Michigan or Tennessee."—*Irving Cobb, as reported by a British journalist*.

Irv was probably referring to our cowboys from Battle Creek. Up there they ride vibrating horses. Or did he mean our Memphis steamboat busters?

"... and she comes to see him in the camp and finds him a proud American with a big chest, a sergeant saluting and saluted."—*Mr. Cobb again*.

We love our sergeants, Mr. Cobb; oh, yes, we do! But we save up our salutes for commissioned officers.

The way the marines kick about having to wear the army uniform you'd think that the uniform consisted of boiled shirt, white vest and clawhammer coat.

Broadway, the papers tell us, is now dark after 11 o'clock at night, and thinks it a hardship. Shucks! We could mention some French cities that until recently were dark after 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

It may be set down as a plain, unvarnished, Teutonic lie that fuel has become so scarce in the States that minstrel shows will soon be abolished by Federal order because of a lack of burnt cork.

"Keep the Home Fires Burning" is very pretty, and all that, but "keep the billet fires aglow" is a lot more practical.

What puzzles us is how Great Britain, on a diet of that war beer can continue to produce tanks that terrorize the Germans.

Both the first and second numbers of the *Stars and Stripes* devote a column or more to the authenticated accounts of German atrocities committed early in the

war during the retreat through Lorraine and around Cambrai, as the English discovered when they advanced last fall. The accounts are full. Comparatively little is left to the American soldier's imagination, but his sense of justice is satisfied by giving him the tale of the evidence.

If the idea was to charge him with energy against the day of his going over the top the stories must have served their purpose. A civilian who reads them finds only two courses open to him. One is to forget what he read, if he can, and read no more. The other is to take such preliminary steps as practice in driving fifteen inches of steel with the hay fork lift through potbellied bundles of withes.

The poets are in great form. Really, as occasional war verse goes—and it goes to weary lengths, heaven knows—nobody writes it much better than the bards in O. D. and tin helmets, who scribble their lays on the backs of envelopes where and when they can. The *Stars and Stripes*, of course, gets the pick of those in France, and encourages them editorially to do their—ah—their most Miltonic.

Private Hudson Hawley of the editorial staff takes a hand now and then and signs his output. THE SUN takes a parental pride in Private Hudson Hawley, who was writing assigned prose for it not many months ago as a reporter. Here is one of his lyrics:

Standin' up here on the fire step,
Lookin' ahead in the mist,
With a tin hat over your ivory
And a rifle clutched in your fist!
Waitin' and watchin', and wond'rin'
If the Hun's comin' over to-night—
Say, aren't the things you think of
Enough to give you a fright?

Things you ain't even thought of
For a couple o' months or more;
Things that 'ull set you laughin',
Things that 'ull make you sore;
Things that you saw in the movies,
Things that you saw on the street,
Things that you're really proud of,
Things that are—not so sweet.

Faces of pals in Homeburg,
Voices of women folk,
Verses you learnt in school days
Pop up in the mist and smoke,
As you stand there, grippin' that rifle,
A-starin', and chilled to the bone,
Wonderin' and wonderin' and wonderin',
Just thinkin' there—all alone!

When will the war be over?
When will the gang break through?
What will the U. S. look like?
What will there be to do?
Where will the Boches be then?
Who will have married Nell?
When's that relief a comin' up?
Gosh! But this thinkin' hell!

The classical ballade form is popular with the bards, perhaps as a graceful compliment to the land of their sojourn and of Francois Villon. Here's the sad, bad Ballade of the Belly Band:

Free advice I hate to hand
Out to any man alive;
Yet the stuff that I have scanned—
"How to live and how to thrive,
And have comfort over here"—
Makes me this one bit advance,
Even though men think you queer:
Wear a belly band in France!

'Tis protection from the chills
Brought by snow and misty air;

'Tis insurance 'gainst the ills
Caused by poor or meagre fare;
'Tis a guarantee of sleep,
Sound, secure—so, 'neath your pants
Have it always, to be sure:
Wear a belly band in France!

Weak of stomach? Play the game,
Else you agony will taste!
Strong of stomach?—All the same,
Wind the worsted 'round your waist;
From an old campaigner swipe
Just this thought: To 'scape the dance
Caused by wracking, fearsome gripe,
Wear a belly band in France!

L'ENVOI

Red Cross knitters—may you get
All the favors Heaven grants!
For you taught me one sure bet:
Wear a belly band in France!

A serial feature is the "Doughboy's Dictionary," from which the following is an extract:

Mess Kit—A collapsible contrivance designed to convey beans from the mess line to the table.

Mess Tools—A collection of implements designed to convey beans from the mess kit to the human face.

Buttons—The modern counterparts of the sword of Damocles—"you hold them but by a single hair."

Muffer—Something wished on you by the dear ones at home which you would like past anything to wish on to the bugler's mouth.

Mule—A hardy and thick skinned quadruped which must be approached with the same caution and trepidation with which one approaches a dud bomb.

Socks—Foot coverings composed of a substance represented to the Government or the Red Cross as being wool, and possessed of the same capacity for contracting holes as is a machine gun target at fifty yards.

For comparison, the *Stars and Stripes* prints parts of a similar dictionary from its contemporary and comrade in arms, *Aussie*, the Australian soldiers' magazine. *Aussie* has a shade the better of the comparison, perhaps. Here are two or three of its definitions:

Archie—A person who aims high, and is not discouraged by daily failures.

Beer—A much appreciated form of nectar now replaced by a colored liquor of a light yellow taste.

Civilian—A male person of tender or great age, or else of weak intellect and faint heart.

Communique—An amusing game played by two or more people with paper and pencil, in which the other side is always losing and your own side is always winning.

Trenches—Long, narrow excavations in earth or chalk, sometimes filled with mud containing soldiers, bits of soldiers, salvage and alleged shelters.

Here is positively the gem poem of the first three issues. Its author deserves the laureate, the cask of wine, the bays and everything else that is coming to laureates with Pershing. His lyre shows a somewhat Swinburnian trend in choice and handling of theme:

THE SUPREME SACRIFICE.

(Corset makers all over the United States are forsaking that line of business in order to devote their factories to the turning out of gas masks for the army.—*News item from the States*.)

Heaven bless the women! They are giving up their corsets
So that we, in snowy France, may 'scape
the Teuton's ire;
Sacrificing form divine so factories may
more sets
Make of gas protectors and of shields
'gainst liquid fire!

Heaven bless the women! They are losing lines each minute
So that we may hold the line from Belfort to the sea;
Giving up their whalebones so that, after we get in it,
We may whale the daylight's outer men from Germanee!

Heaven bless the women! They are wearing middy blouses
As a sort of camouflage, the while we spite the Hun;
Donning Mother Hubbards, too, and keeping to the houses
While we Yanks, gas-helmeted, put Fritzies on the run!

Heaven bless the women and their perfect thirty-sixes!
Waists we clasped a-waltzing they some other way now drape,
Disregarding fashion so that every Yank may fix his
Breathing tube at "Gas-alert!" and thus preserve his shape!

Heaven bless the women! They are doing without dancing,
Knitting, packing, helping in a hundred thousand ways;
But they help the most by this while the foe's advancing—
Giving us the staying power by going without their stays!

Here are the seven column headlines from the three specimen sports pages so far received:

"ALLIES THE FAVORITES IN BETTING ODDS ON BIG WORLD'S SERIES."

"RUSSIA BENCHED: NO MORE WEAK HITTERS."

"HOOVER WORKS SQUEEZE PLAY ON YANKS."

A letter of suggestions for boys back home, who expect to come over presently, is so good that it really ought to be given in full. A few of the more pertinent suggestions:

DEAR FELLOW SCRAPPERS: Some of us have been over here a good eight months and more. Most of us have been over for at least half that time. The rest of us have been over here for varying amounts of time, and all of us long enough to be in a position to hand you a little friendly advice about how to prepare for the trip, what to expect over here, and what not to expect. Here, then, are a few hunches from some old and seasoned campaigners:

Throw away your "parley-voo" books and forget all the French the Y. M. has been teaching you in your cantonment huts this winter. You won't need it.

Begin to take baths right now. If you've got about six weeks before sailing time, start in to take one bath every day and two on Sunday, and manage to ring in four extra ones in between times. That will equip you with a good fifty-two baths, giving you an average of one a week for a year, which is the minimum prescribed by regulations. Baths in France are as hard to find as celebrators of Yom Kippur in an A. O. H. convention; so bathe while the bathing is good and handy.

The *Stars and Stripes* is, soberly and literally, a wonder. May its circulation never grow less!